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SPACE-SYNTAX AND METRE IN THE INSCRIPTION  
OF YAḤAWMILK, KING OF BYBLOS

REINHARD G. LEHMANN

## SPACE-SYNTAX AND METRE IN THE INSCRIPTION OF YAḤAWMILK, KING OF BYBLOS

REINHARD G. LEHMANN

In 1869, a local inhabitant of Jebeil, the site of ancient Gubla/Byblos, found an inscribed stele along with two lion figures<sup>1</sup> while digging holes to plant trees near his house. This happened in what can be regarded as the courtyard of that location which the famous French scholar Ernest Renan some years before identified as probably the sanctuary of the *Ba'alat-Gubla*, the main goddess and "Mistress of Byblos".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Presumably the lion figures served as a plinth for the stele, cf. the reconstructed montage in Ph. Berger, *Histoire de l'écriture dans l'antiquité*, Paris 1892 (pl. following p. 162, and front piece); cf. also for the lions of Byblos E. Renan, *Mission de Phénicie*, Paris 1864-1874 (reprint 1998), 175f. 397, 702; É. Gubel, *Art Phénicien. La sculpture de tradition phénicienne*, Paris 2002, 67f.

<sup>2</sup> The exact location of the site where the stele was found, i. e. where the house of the unknown finder was, remains unclear. But it is most probable that it indeed was in the atrium of the sanctuary of the *Ba'alat-Gubla*, which later was excavated by Dunand. The only report on the circumstances is given in a letter which Péretié wrote, supposedly in the same year 1869, to Renan. Aimé Péretié (1808-1882) was the French consul in Beirut who mediated the acquisition of the stele by Louis De Clercq. His letter is printed in Renan's *Mission de Phénicie*, 1864-1874, p. 855 (additional note to p. 176) and will be cited here: "Je ne suis point allé moi-même sur les lieux, dans la crainte d'éveiller l'attention, toujours fâcheuse en pareil cas de l'autorité locale, surtout depuis les derniers règlements; mais d'après tous les rapports qui m'ont été faits, et que j'ai lieu de croire exacts, la stèle qui porte

Despite its heavily weathered and damaged surface the first decipherment<sup>3</sup> was already able to ascertain that the stele was erected by a

l'inscription a été trouvée à environ 25 ou 30 mètres de l'angle sud-est du château de Gébeil, tout près d'une maison située en face de ce même angle, et qui doit être le bâtiment qui termine, au sud, l'endroit indiqué sur le plan de la planche XIX de la *Mission de Phénicie*, comme présentant des 'vestiges de constructions anciennes'. C'est en creusant la terre devant cette maison, pour planter quelques arbres, que le propriétaire, un musulman, découvrit une sorte de porte sur le seuil de laquelle se trouvait la pierre en question. Elle était debout, placée entre deux lions, ou pour mieux dire entre deux avant-corps de lions ...". From what is said here by Péretié himself it is clear that Péretié was not the discoverer of the stele, as is claimed in De Vogüé 1875, 25, and in Euting's study, too. In contrast, in *CIS*, it is reported correctly: "Anno 1869, homo indigena, dum arbores ad januam domus suae conserit ... insigne lapidem de quo nunc agimus luci reddidit". – According to the rendering by Péretié, which hardly can be correct, the house of the unknown native finder should have been located only a few meters apart from that place, where Renan some years before stopped the trench of the French army (Renan, *Stèle de Yahawmelek, Roi de Gebal: Journal des Savants* [1875] 448-456). On Renan's map this could only be the place opposite the south-east corner of the crusader's citadel, which is entitled "vestiges de constructions anciennes" (Renan, *Mission de Phénicie*, pl. XIX; also Renan in *Journal des Savants* [1875] 448). But in later excavations in the 1930's there were found no vestiges of the Persian period, but only an early Christian basilica on that place (Dunand, *Encore la stele de Yahavmilk, Roi de Byblos: BMB* 5 [1941] 57-85. 58f.). But the until then missing bottom right fragment of the stele was found opposite the south-west corner of the citadel, thus, right next to the place which in the meantime has been identified as the sanctuary of the *Ba'alat-Gubla* (Dunand 1941, 57). According to Renan's map, this is most probably the place which is denoted "endroit où fut trouvé le bas relief égyptien". It seems that Péretié's Arab informants have mistaken the wrong "l'angle sud-est" for correct French "l'angle sud-ouest" or got their wrong bearings by using a map (compare similar suspicions by Dunand 1941, 59). – This furthermore undermines Renan's earlier claim, made in 1860/61 to have found the vestiges of the sanctuary of the *Ba'alat* at this (wrong!) place, cf. also Renan, *Stèle de Yehawmelek, Roi de Gebal: Journal des Savants* (1875) 448. Anyway, Renan uttered this claim only *after* the stele was found. There is nothing like that in the letter of Péretié nor in Renan's *Mission de Phénicie*. Note that De Vogüé 1875, 25 only says: "non loin des tranchées faites en 1860 par la mission de Phénicie." What is "non loin"? The information about the find-spot seems to become more and more clear until Euting 1876, but the whole scenario remains a construction!

<sup>3</sup> The first decipherment was made by Eugène-Melchior De Vogüé, *Stèle de Yehawmelek, Roi de Gebal: CRAIBL* (1875) 24-49 (= *Stèle de Yehawmelek, Roi de Gebal*. Paris: Imprimerie nationale 1875), and then with additional remarks by E. Renan, *Stèle de Yehawmelek, Roi de Gebal: Journal des Savants* (1875) 448-456.

certain Yaḥawmilk, king of Byblos, as a dedication to his lady, the *Ba'alat-Gubla*.

Soon after its discovery the stele was acquired by the French antiquities collector Louis De Clercq (1836-1901), whose heirs later gave it to the Louvre museum of Paris, where it can still be seen today. It is made of local limestone and measures 114 to 55 cm with a thickness of 26 cm. As was already noted in the first report by De Vogüé in 1875 and is shown in the to-scale reconstruction drawing of Clermont-Ganneau (Fig. 1), these dimensions indicate a ratio of 4:2:1.<sup>4</sup> A missing fragment of the right bottom part was found 70 years later in the same place.<sup>5</sup> For palaeographic reasons, because of the Persian-style scene above, and because of subsequently confirmed stratigraphy the stele is to be dated to the Persian period, i. e. the 5<sup>th</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

The stele, nowadays counted as *CIS* I, 1 or *KAI* 10, was estimated by the German scholar Julius Euting to be "one of the most beautiful and most peculiar the Phoenicians left to us".<sup>6</sup> In the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it became the subject of a vast number of mainly French studies. A first report and decipherment, together with a tentative translation of its upper part, was given in 1875 by the Comte E.-M. De Vogüé,<sup>7</sup> followed immediately by Ernest Renan, who, supported by Philippe Berger, contributed additional observations mainly on the lower part. A first reproduction of the whole stele was published one year later, 1876, by the aforementioned Euting as a

<sup>4</sup> E.-M. De Vogüé, *Stèle de Yehawmelek, Roi de Gebal*: *CRAIBL* (1875) 24-49 (= *Stèle de Yehawmelek, Roi de Gebal*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale 1875); Ch. Clermont-Ganneau, *La stèle de Byblos*, in: (idem) *Études d'archéologie orientale*, Paris 1880 (1895), p. 1-36 and 83-84, here p. 2, cf. É. Gubel, *Art Phénicien*, Paris 2002, 66.

<sup>5</sup> Published by M. Dunand, *Fouilles de Byblos I*, 1939, 56f. + pl. XXXIX and Dunand: *BMB* 5 (1941) 57-85. Today the bottom right fragment seems to be untraceable. Maybe it was lost during the Lebanese civil war.

<sup>6</sup> J. Euting, *Inscriptio III. Inschrift von Gebäl*: *ZDMG* 30 (1876) 132-137.132.

<sup>7</sup> Eugène-Melchior De Vogüé, *Stèle de Yehawmelek, Roi de Gebal*: *CRAIBL* (1875) 24-49 (= *Stèle de Yehawmelek, Roi de Gebal*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale 1875). De Vogüé made his study in haste while the ship bringing the stone to Paris stopped for a short time in Constantinople, which explains its unevenness in some parts.



Fig. 1: The Dedication Stele of Yahawmilk  
Drawing by Ch. Clermont-Ganneau 1880 (reduced)



lithograph drawn from a photograph.<sup>8</sup> It was Euting, too, who provided the first drawing of the inscription, which he did himself from a paper squeeze, in the same issue of the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* from 1876 (Fig. 2). Though difficult to read, J. Euting's drawing, made in the well-known precise technique of this scholar,<sup>9</sup> remains the only true-to-scale drawing of the inscription to this day.<sup>10</sup>

Since 1898 this drawing is available in reduced scale to a broader public as part of the plates volume in M. Lidzbarski's *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik*, which became an authoritative edition and handbook for Northwest Semitic inscriptions.<sup>11</sup> Also as early as in 1881, the only large-scale photograph was published as heliogravure in the long-time most authoritative *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*, together with a type-set reproduction in Phoenician letters and a commentary in Latin, which unfortunately is of no benefit to most modern scholars anymore.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> J. Euting: *ZDMG* 30 (1876) 132-137.

<sup>9</sup> J. Euting: *ZDMG* 30 (1876) 134; there he wrote: "Gegenüber der vornehmen Geringschätzung, mit der man heutigen Tages hie und da auf die technische Ausführung einer epigraphischen Reproduktion herunterzusehen beliebt (beziehungsweise die Schwierigkeiten und den Werth derselben nicht zu verstehen scheint), bemerke ich nur, dass mit dem richtigen Sehen und dem richtigen Zeichnen in vielen Fällen die richtige Interpretation geradezu schon gegeben ist".

<sup>10</sup> Another, more easily readable drawing that claims to be true-to-scale was later made by Dunand and published in 1941 (*BMB* 5, p. 73), but there are indications that it is not as precise as the drawing by Euting. In some cases, it seems to be touched up. At the very least, it is not reliable enough for an assessment of word spacing since it gives letters only in linear form without indicating the thickness of each letter.

<sup>11</sup> M. Lidzbarski, *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik*, 1898, Tf. III.

<sup>12</sup> [*Corpus*] *Inscriptionum Semiticarum ab academia inscriptionum et litterarum humaniorum conditum atque digestum. Pars Prima. Inscriptiones phoenicias continens*. I, Paris 1881 [*CIS* I, 1]. - It is one of the curiosities of the impressive *CIS*-project that Phoenician inscriptions were reproduced in Phoenician printing types which were especially designed for the *CIS* by typographical authorities like Aubert and others, see for that: Ph. Berger, Notice sur les caractères phéniciens destinés à l'impression du corpus inscriptionum semiticarum: *Journal Asiatique* (1880) 5-34 and, more recently, *Les caractères de l'imprimerie nationale*, Paris, Imprimerie nationale 1990, 160-165.

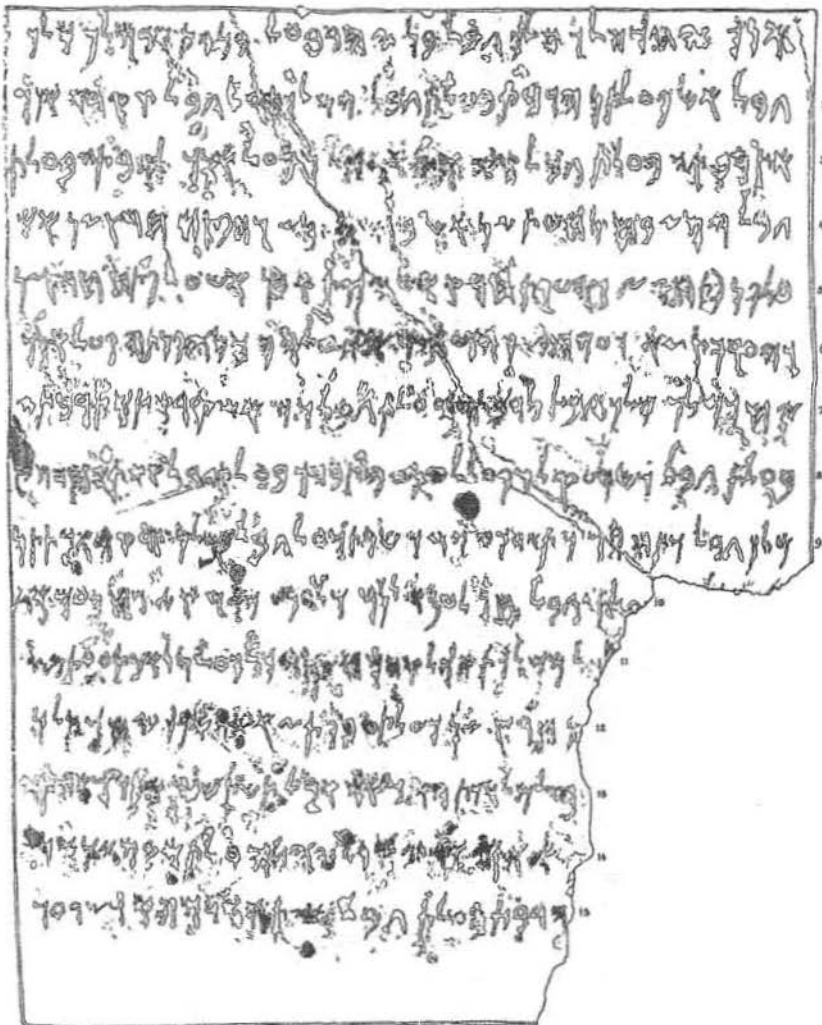


Fig. 2: The First Drawing of the Yahawmilk Inscription  
by: J. Euting 1876 (reduced)

Although now the inscription was easily accessible in scholarly editions and, together with the later discovered additional fragment, was almost complete, most scholars in later years concentrated on text and grammar only and ignored questions of palaeography because of the damaged surface of the stone and the script. However, in my opinion, although it is true that the heavily weathered stone will forever remain inaccessible for the study of typological subtleties, there is no reason to restrict oneself only to questions of grammar and lexicography. Aside from questions of Phoenician philology and palaeographic stratification, the stele of Yaḥawmilk may allow for some revealing observations related to Phoenician scribal behaviour and poetic form – or let us say in brief: to the *Semiotik der Textgestalt*<sup>13</sup> in the Levant of the middle of the first millennium BCE.

The basic observation for the topic of this paper had already been made more than 100 years ago, in 1880, by the French scholar Ch. Clermont-Ganneau but was, as it seems to me, simply forgotten in later years. I will call it to mind again here because it provides some benefit not only for current problems of epigraphy but also for Northwest Semitic philology in general. What I mean is a certain lack of scribal regularity in the inscription of Yaḥawmilk.

For the unbiased eye, the painstaking and brilliant squeeze-facsimile drawing of the inscription by Euting<sup>14</sup> simply shows an uneven appearance of the writing, which stems from some occasional broader distances between letters. In other words: the letters are badly spaced. Moreover, as even Clermont-Ganneau had already seen and felt was important enough to have it stressed by italics in his report: “*les mots sont séparés*” – the words are separated!<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See for example W. Raible, *Die Semiotik der Textgestalt. Erscheinungsformen und Folgen eines kulturellen Evolutionsprozesses*. Heidelberg: Winter 1991 (Abhandlungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse). – Aside from the illustrative term *Semiotik der Textgestalt* (semiotics of text layout) it is important to note that Raible's description of the development from *scriptio continua* to spaced writing does not fit the historical facts.

<sup>14</sup> It does not matter whether the original publication by Euting in *ZDMG* 30 (1876) 132-137 or the reduced one in Lidzbarski's *Handbuch* 1898, Tf. III is taken.

<sup>15</sup> Ch. Clermont-Ganneau 1880, p. 6. Few lines later, he continues: “Pour faire apparaître nettement ces vides, il faut [...] considérer l'inscription de très loin, à une distance où on ne peut presque plus la lire. On voit alors les groupes de lettres et les intervalles isolateurs se dessiner d'une façon frappante. Une personne, étrangère non-seulement à la connaissance du phénicien, mais à toute notion d'épigraphie sémitique, peut, à l'aide d'un crayon, par exemple, marquer ces intervalles avec

Although Ch. Clermont-Ganneau also noticed that *not every* word was separated by a space, he felt sure that there was a rule to be detected by a new investigation of all known Phoenician inscriptions formerly held to be written in *scriptio continua*.<sup>16</sup>

As a matter of fact, in 1881 the *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*<sup>17</sup> also gave an account of word separation. Moreover, spaces occur a little bit too often there and an unsuspecting reader could regard it as a 'normalized' spaced text. This might be the explanation for the disregard of spaces in all later studies. But the introduction to our inscription in the *Corpus* (CIS I, 1), written in artificial and stilted Latin, is highly remarkable, for it pinpoints the current state of research at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Maybe because it was written in Latin, nobody took notice of its basic observation, which finally was totally ignored or forgotten in 20<sup>th</sup> century scholarship.

*Animadvertet lector lapicidam caesuras inter elementa lege non certa ita disposuisse ut plerumque vocum separationi respondeant; attamen non raro voces caesura divellit; saepius voces plurimae in unum coalescunt. Versus ita sunt dispositi ut salva vocum integritate plerumque desinant.*<sup>18</sup>

"The reader realizes that the chiseller did not set the caesuras (i. e. spaces) between the letters reliably in such a regular way that they correspond with the limits of a single word. Although a caesura not seldom divides a word, more frequently some words merge into one. The lines mostly are arranged in such a manner that they end without breaking a word".

Despite that it was thus confirmed as a former current state of research already in 1881 that the inscription was not simply written in *scriptio continua* but that there are *caesurae* between words, unfortunately there is no further research history to take note of. Because nobody was able to give a satisfying explanation, the existence of those caesuras in Yahawmilk was neglected under the presumption that they were the work of an untrained

autant, avec plus de sûreté peut-être, et, en tout cas, avec moins de chances de prévention qu'un homme du métier. L'expérience réussit parfaitement avec la stèle de Byblos et prouve que cette observation ne repose pas sur une illusion mais sur un fait réel". See also below n. 23.

<sup>16</sup> Ch. Clermont-Ganneau 1880, p. 6: "L'on ne saurait donc trop conseiller, quand on aborde la lecture d'un texte phénicien, de procéder, avant tout autre examen, à cette inspection d'ensemble. Je recommande vivement de soumettre à cette épreuve toutes inscriptions phéniciennes tenues jusqu'ici avoir été écrites d'après le principe de la *scriptio continua*".

<sup>17</sup> CIS I, 1 p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> CIS I, 1 p. 4.

scribe only, therefore considered irrelevant and finally forgotten. As a matter of fact, the job suggested by Ch. Clermont-Ganneau – to recollect all Phoenician inscriptions and to investigate their spacing, which actually at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century could have been done by a single scholar – never has been done.

Even a new facsimile drawing provided by M. Dunand in 1941 does not truly trace every letter spacing any more, faithfully following the rule that one cannot see a thing which one does not have any knowledge of. By chance, Dunand's drawing reflects some spaces, but without any reliability.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, Dunand's new publication, too, could only suggest to the modern reader that the text was virtually written in *scriptio continua*. Without new large-scale photographs which allow exact measuring of every single letter-distance, the situation could not improve.

Today, the most common assumption is that the Yaḥawmilk text is written in uneven *scriptio continua* if ever someone cares about its layout, its script and its spaces at all. Actually there is not any later scholarly publication on the Yaḥawmilk stele than the *CIS* of 1881 that pays attention to those caesuras or even mentions them. This is even true in the studies of A. Dupont-Sommer from 1950 and later scholars. The currently available Phoenician textbooks present the text in Hebrew square letters with consequent lexematic spacing and lack any information about the script at all.<sup>20</sup>

Taking into account the bad state of preservation, the disregard of such details as scribal technique is understandable. Said non-observance might even be methodologically required if one works under the assumption that spaces really were mere irregularities or occasional variations of letter distances, caused for instance by a careless or untrained scribe. But scribes do not often make serious mistakes, and a royal stele would not have been written by a complete beginner who was unaware of correct letter distances. It is a methodological requirement, too, not to make some supposedly untrained scribes or beginners responsible for everything that we ourselves do not understand palaeographically or, even worse, to falsely label inscriptions as writing exercises if they are not written in an expected manner.

In actual fact the caesuras of this inscription are of such a nature that they can only be seen as intentional word spacing, i. e. as real spaces. A cursory overview of the old heliogravure print in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum* – the biggest photograph of the inscription ever published –

<sup>19</sup> Note that also the photograph in Dunand *BMB* 5 [1941] is taken from an impression of the stone and not from the original, see p. 57 and 74!

<sup>20</sup> *KAI* 10; *IFO* 5.1; Cooke p. 18; *TSSI* III p. 94.

makes it clear that a broader distance between letters only occurs *between* lexemes but never *within* a single lexeme, which otherwise could have been expected in a text of 16 lines with more than 150 words.<sup>21</sup> This means that the conventional explanation of these caesuras as mere chance or as carelessness is to be rejected even for statistical reasons. Statistics aside, there has to be a linguistic reason for the bad spacing of letters. Or, to say it with a more unbiased expression, we need an explanation for the slight and occasional setting of spaces between words (word spacing) that has to do with the language itself or with text and contents of this very stele in particular.

With the help of new high resolution photographs (Figs. 3, 5) provided by the *West Semitic Research Project* of the University of Southern California<sup>22</sup> we were able to confirm what Ch. Clermont-Ganneau noted one hundred years ago. As a result, I will present a new collation (cp. Figs. 4, 6) of the text and a transliteration which takes into consideration chiefly its spacing, showing that these spacing occur mostly in remarkable positions which can be described linguistically. In this transliteration, the lexemes which are written close together in *scriptio continua* are connected by hyphens, and the clearly traceable spaces are visualized as grey blocks (■). Some extremely narrow or dubious spaces or otherwise doubtful parts of the text have - if necessary, an additional - curled underline ( \_ or ▤) (pl. 1).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> See already the short and preliminary remarks in R. Lehmann, *Studien zur Formgeschichte der 'Eqrón-Inschrift des 'KYŠ und den phönizischen Dedikationstexten aus Byblos: Ugarit- Forschungen* 31 (1999) 255-306. 281f.

<sup>22</sup> Conducted by B. Zuckerman, see <http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp>.

<sup>23</sup> The transcription took its final shape during the course of critical and persistent discussions in a study group of graduates and post-graduates of the 'Forschungsstelle für Althebräische Sprache und Epigraphik' at the University of Mainz, which I had the honour to conduct together with Dr. Johannes F. Diehl, and to which I owe a lot. Following the stimulus given by Ch. Clermont-Ganneau himself (above no. 15), the reading of spaces has also been cross-checked under the supervision of Dr. Peter Kuri by the pupils of two classes of a German secondary school who neither knew any Semitic language nor saw such script in their life before.

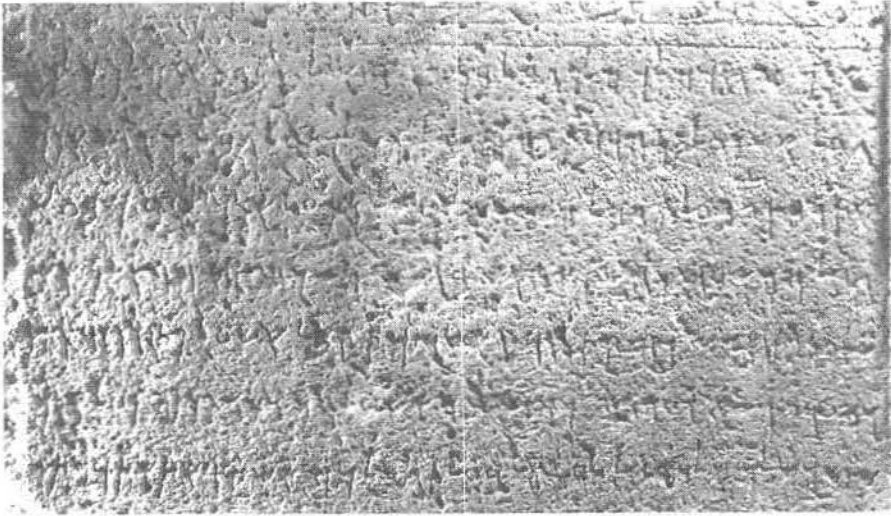


Fig. 3: Top Part of the Inscription, Line 1-7  
 Photograph by: B. Zuckerman, West Semitic Research Project  
 Courtesy Musée du Louvre

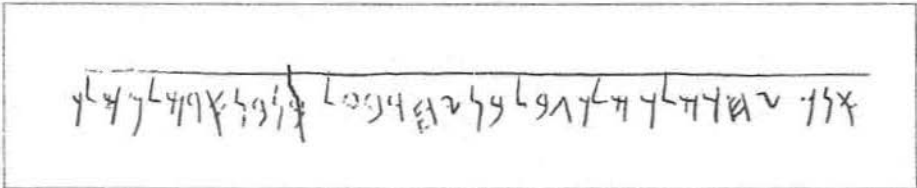


Fig. 4: Drawing of Line 1  
 Specimen of Space Divisions in the Yaḥawmilk Inscription



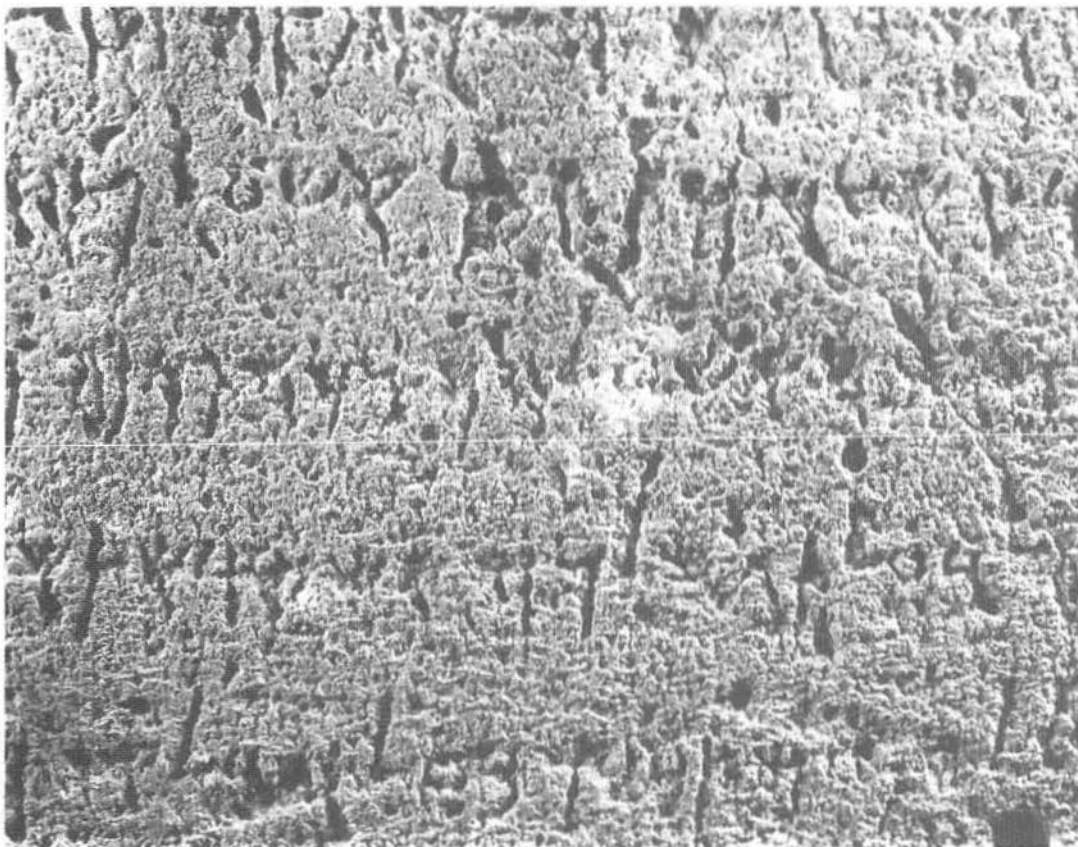


Fig. 5: Middle Part of Lines 5-8

Photograph by: B. Zuckerman, West Semitic Research Project - Courtesy Musée du Louvre



[illegible]

Fig. 6: Drawing of the First Section of Lines 4-8

- 1 ʾnk yḥwmlk mlk-gbl bn-yḥrbʿl bn-bn-ʾrmlk-mlk  
 2 gbl ʾpʿltn hrbt-bʿlt-gbl mmlkt-ʿl-gbl wqrʾ-ʾnk  
 3 ʾt-rbty-bʿlt-gbl-wšmʿ[...]-ql wpʿl-ʾnk lrbty-bʿlt  
 4 gbl hmzbḥ-nḥšt zn ʾš bḥz[•]h-z whptḥ ḥrṣ-zn ʾš  
 5 ʿl-pn-ptḥy-z whʿpt-ḥrṣ ʾš-btk-t-ʾbn ʾš-ʿl-ptḥ ḥrṣ-zn  
 6 whʿrpt-zʾ wʿmdh whktrm ʾš-ʿl-hm wmspnth pʿl-ʾnk  
 7 yḥwmlk mlk-gbl lrbty bʿlt-gbl-km ʾš-qrʾ-t-ʾrbty  
 8 bʿlt-gbl wšmʿ-ql wpʿl-ly-nʿm tbrk bʿlt-gbl-ʾyt-yḥwmlk  
 9 mlk-gbl wthww wtʾrk-ymw-wšntw-ʿl-gbl-k-mlk-šdq-hʾ-wttn  
 10 [lw hrbt b]ʿlt-gbl ḥn lʿn-ʾlnm wlʿn-ʿm-ʾrṣ-z whn-ʿm-ʾr=  
 11 =š-z[.....]-kl-mmlkt wkl-ʾdm ʾš-ysp-lpʿl-mlʿkt-ʿlt-mz=  
 12 =bḥ zn [wʿlt pt]ḥ ḥrṣ zn wʿlt-ʿrpt-zʾ šm-ʾnk-yḥwmlk  
 13 mlk-gbl [tšt ʾ]k-ʿl-mlʿkt-hʾ wʾm-ʾbl-tšt-šm ʾk wʾm-ts=  
 14 =r mlʿkt zʾ [wts]g-ʾt-h[q/ʿ?...]z-dl-ysdh ʿlt-mqm-z-wtgł  
 15 mstrw tsrh[w]-hrbt-bʿlt-gbl ʾyt-hʾdm-hʾ wzrʿw  
 16 ʾt-pn kl-ʾln-g[bl]

Pl. 1: Transliteration of the Yaḥawmilk Stele with Marked Spaces



Two important general observations are to be made here:

- First, the distribution of spaces is not uniform. As can be seen in a quick overview, there are slightly more spaces in the first half of the lines, than towards their end. There is also a slight decline of spaces from top to bottom. This on the one hand significant, on the other hand slight decline in number and distribution of spaces or, otherwise, tendency towards smaller spaces, is presumably triggered by a certain pressure from the imminent end of line or text respectively. This corresponds with the fact that, as far as possible, word division in line breaks is avoided and happens only later in the text in lines 10/11 (*ʿrlš*), 11/12 (*mzlbbh*), and 13/14 (*tslr*) – as already noted by Clermont-Ganneau.<sup>24</sup>
- Secondly, as already stated above, spacing never occurs between letters *within* a single word, but only at word boundaries, that means: only *between* words. But on the other hand spacing does not happen at *every* margin of a word, i. e. not every lexeme is enclosed by spaces. There is rather an *interplay of cohesion and separation* between groups of words, looking as if speech is coagulating. The spacing therefore can neither have the same function as the word separation spaces in the Egyptian Aramaic papyri and modern Western writing, nor is like the use of word dividing points which appear, for instance, in most ancient Hebrew inscriptions, in the Moabite Mesha stele, and in most early Phoenician inscriptions. As a consequence, the spacing cannot be determined by lexematic implications only, and it cannot be based on an idea of ‘word’ – at least not in a modern sense.

Despite the apparent lack of uniformity there is also a certain regularity in morphosyntactic position of spaces. Let us briefly take a look at the most striking features:

1. The Byblian-only two-letter (and presumably disyllabic<sup>25</sup>) demonstrative *zn* is never joined to both sides, but has a space at least *after* it:

(4) *whpth*  *hrš-zn* 

(5) *š-ʾ-ptḥ*  *hrš-zn*  (end of line)

Because it mostly stands between two spaces (lines 4.12.12), and never appears to be only joined to the *following* word alone, I suppose that it has a certain tendency to isolation – whatever this means. The instances are as follows:

<sup>24</sup> Ch. Clermont-Ganneau 1880, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> <sup>3</sup>PPG §115.

(4) *hmzbbh-nhšt zn*(11/12) *ʔlt-mzbbh zn*(12) *pt]h hrš zn*

Nearly the same is true with *z'*, the feminine counterpart of *zn*. It appears three times, two of which may be spaced to both sides (lines 6.14) with a questionable space once before it, the other time after it, and once either joined to both sides or with a very small space *after* it (line 12):

(6) *wh'ṛpt z'*(14) *ml'kt z' [...]*(12) *w'lt-ṛpt-z'*

Taking into account that the occurrence in line 6 can also be regarded as double-spaced, that the questionable occurrence in line 12 is near the end of the line, and that the occurrence in line 14 is directly bordered on the *lacuna*, I suggest that the normal position of *z'*, like that of its masculine counterpart, is isolated and double-spaced, if ever possible, or at least enclitic, i.e. after-spaced.

On the other hand, the single-letter demonstrative *z* never stands alone, but is mostly attached to the foregoing word with a space *after* it, as it is shown in the following instances:

(4) *bḥz[•]h-z*(5) *ʔl-pn-pthy-z*(10) *wl'n-ʔm-ṛš-z*

or it seems to be joined to both sides:

(10/11) *wḥn-ʔm-ṛ]š-z[...]*(14) *h[q/ʔ'...]z-dl-ysdh*(14) *ʔlt-mqm-z-wtql*

It goes without saying that, despite the tendency of the demonstrative towards isolation, double-spaced isolation of monosyllabic single-letter words is not possible, neither as prepositions, nor as demonstratives.<sup>26</sup>

2. In many Northwest Semitic inscriptions bound construct+regnant noun forms have no dividing dot or space between their elements. This also seems to be the rule in the Yaḥawmilk inscription, as is seen in the never-spaced

<sup>26</sup> Cf. A. Millard, "Scriptio Continua" in Early Hebrew. Ancient Practice or Modern Surmise?: *JSS* 15 (1970) 2-15.

instances *mlk-gbl*, *b'lt-gbl*, *'n-'lnm*, and this is even true in tripartite or longer construct chains:<sup>27</sup>

|                              |                                                |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <i>mlk-gbl</i>               | (lines 1. 7. 9. 13)                            |
| <i>b'lt-gbl</i>              | (lines 2. 3. 3/4. 7. 8 <sub>x2</sub> . 10. 15) |
| <i>hmzbbh-nḥšt</i>           | (line 4)                                       |
| <i>wh'pt-hrṣ</i>             | (line 5)                                       |
| <i>btk-t-'bn</i>             | (line 5)                                       |
| <i>'n-'lnm</i>               | (line 10)                                      |
| <i>l'n-'m-'rṣ-z</i>          | (line 10)                                      |
| <i>whn-'m-'rṣ-z</i>          | (lines 10/11)                                  |
| <i>wkt-'dm</i>               | (line 11)                                      |
| <i>kt-'ln-g[bl]</i>          | (line 16)                                      |
| <i>bn-bn-'rmlk-mlk-l-gbl</i> | (lines 1/2)                                    |

However, obviously lexematic line-break is possible, as shown in lines 1/2 and 3/4.

There is only one exception with a space within a bound construct+regnant phrase, which appears three times. It is the same expression *pth hrṣ-zn* in lines 4, 5, and 12, which is not given in the above list and will be dealt with later.

3. The relative *ʾ* in all eight occurrences (lines 2.4.4.5.5.6.7.11) is unambiguously preceded by a space, i. e. separated from the foregoing word. I would suggest that there is a strong motivation for that phenomenon because this spacing happens even after the preposition *km* in line 7,<sup>28</sup> and in the narrowly written line 11, which is between two word-breaking line-breaks (lines 10/11 and 11/12) and has only two spaces at all. This observation corresponds to the well-known phenomenon often occurring in dividing-dot-written Phoenician texts: that the relative *ʾ* is graphically

<sup>27</sup> A. Millard 1970, 15: "Words are separated from each other except for:

- (1) single-letter proclitic particles (e.g. *ב*, *ו*, *כ*)
- (2) sometimes the *nota accusativi*
- (3) sometimes bound forms (construct+regnant noun, infinitive absolute+regnant verb)
- (4) sometimes the third person plural suffix".

<sup>28</sup> It should be noted that this is, at least in terms of Classical Hebrew, highly remarkable, cf. the frequent *כאשר* where the relative is obviously bound to the preposition.

proclitic.<sup>29</sup> This position of 'š is exactly how G. Fecht described it for Phoenician metrics.<sup>30</sup> The instances are as follows:

- (2)    'š-*p'ltn*
- (4)    'š *bḥz[•]h-z*
- (4/5)   'š'l-*pn-pṭhy-z*
- (5)    'š-*btkt- 'bn*
- (5)    'š-*'l-pṭh*
- (6)    'š-*'l-hm*
- (7)    'š-*qr't- 't-rbty*
- (11)   'š-*ysp-lp'l-ml'kt*

There is a remarkable case in line 4, where the relative, which here stands in first slot in a chain of 'š-extensions, is spaced on both sides. In an oral performance this might have corresponded to a special signal of the epic poet or singer for his audience to be aware of the special structure of the next few verses!

4. The most interesting case is the spaced construct+regnant relationship *pṭh* *ḥrṣ* which appears thrice, the instances of which are:

- (4)    *whpṭh* *ḥrṣ-zn*
- (5)    'š-*'l-pṭh* *ḥrṣ-znl*
- (12)   *[w'lṭ pṭ]h* *ḥrṣ zn*

It is conspicuous that all three instances are followed by the demonstrative *zn*, and that the first two of them are those already noted (where *zn* is not written double-spaced). One cannot help suspecting that single-spacing of *-zn* (which only appears after *pṭh* *ḥrṣ* in our text) is there only because spacing of the bound phrase is demanded here for some

<sup>29</sup> For instance in the Cypriote inscription from Palaeo-Kastro 'š-*p'l* 'š*mnḥlṣ* ..., Caquot/Masson: *Syria* 45 (1968) 296.

<sup>30</sup> G. Fecht in his *Metrik des Hebräischen und Phönizischen*, 1990, 187f: "Die proklitischen [Relativpronomen] 'š und z- bilden mit dem ersten Kolon des nachfolgenden Teils des Relativsatzes ein Kolon. Der attributive Relativsatz hat vor 'š-/z- immer eine Kolongrenze, denn er ist ja auch in seiner Minimalform mehr als attributives Adj. (Part.) [...]". For the question whether proclitic Byblian-Phoenician *z-* really should be regarded as relative pronoun, see R. G. Lehmann, *Studien zur Formgeschichte der 'Ekron-Inschrift des 'KYŠ und den phönizischen Dedikationstexten aus Byblos: UF* 31 (1999) 255-306.

stronger reason. This would have caused, together with double-spaced *zn*, a chain of two double-spaced words after one another, which is indeed the case only with *ḥrṣ* *zn* (line 12) and possibly *ml'kt* *z'* (line 14).

But why, in contrast to all other construct+regnant chains, is this very expression *pth* *ḥrṣ* in our inscription three times broken by a space? Internal spacing or dotted division of bound construct+regnant forms or attributive phrases is, as far as we know, unusual in North-Semitic texts as long as they provide a minimum of freedom to skip spaces or dividing dots.<sup>31</sup>

Here, in the Yaḥawmilk stele, it is only this striking threefold occurrence of a compound, the first element of which ends and the second begins with the same grapheme <Ḥ>. Given that case endings and final unstressed vowels have long since vanished, and given the rule (or scribal convention) that identical letters cannot stand together unless there was a vowel sound between them (or otherwise would produce a *sandhi*<sup>32</sup>), the reason for regular space within *pth* *ḥrṣ* seems to be a simple scribal avoidance of *sandhi*. This makes even more sense if the two contacting <Ḥ>-graphemes did not represent the same phoneme.<sup>33</sup>


Since the Phoenician alphabet does not allow a graphemic distinction between the two semantically distinctive phonemes /h/ and /ħ/, there are several possibilities which depend on the semantics of the involved lexemes. One has to decide whether the writing <PTH> means the pharyngeal fricative and represents /pħ/ 'to open' (which is original /pħ/), or whether it is /pħ/ 'to engrave' (with velar fricative, which I think is correct here), and, of course, whether the Phoenicians still knew the difference in pronunciation. I think they did just as the Hebrew-Israelites did until the Hellenistic period.<sup>34</sup> And then, one has also to decide whether <ḤRṢ> is /ħrṣ/ 'Gold' (which is original *ḥrṣ*) or something else.

<sup>31</sup> <sup>3</sup>PPG § 219; Millard 1970, 15.

<sup>32</sup> Compare the well-known examples in DN like *MLqrt* for *MLk-qrt*; or PN *mlkty* for *mlk-ky* 'king of Kition', and other, see <sup>3</sup>PPG §99.

<sup>33</sup> For instance the grapheme <Y>, which unambiguously represents the phoneme /y/ only, sometimes causes a graphemic *sandhi* in Hebrew inscriptions, e.g. *ḥyḥwh* for *hy yḥwh* in Lachish 3:9 (AHI 1.003).

<sup>34</sup> See the proving Hebrew examples in E. Lipiński, *Semitic Languages. Outline of a Comparative Grammar*, Leuven 1997, 145, though Lipiński's claim, that in Phoenician instead "nothing suggests the survival of a distinction between the velar and the pharyngeal fricatives" seems to be revised, at least in Byblian.

To make it short here: I am convinced that the scribe knew (or at least instinctively felt) what he did, and that he wrote the bound phrase *pth*  *hṛš*, despite all conventions, broken by a space to avoid a *sandhi* and to produce an unambiguously readable expression which, of course, is best read and translated all three times as 'golden engraving', and nothing else.

Taking into account both, the striking morphosyntactic parameters of spacing or not-spacing as shown above, and the evident orthographic freedom given with a certain unevenness or decline of spaces, we must conclude that there is no pressure imposed by the system to set spaces. Rather, whether the scribe preferred to set spaces or not to do so depends on the intuitive power of an *oral process*, the seminal parameters of which seem to be rhythm and metre, and the account of which is the *space syntax* of that written text.

Even if we do not know the exact circumstances of the archaeological discovery of the artifact, we have good reason to assume that there is a significant difference between the Yaḥawmilk stele on one hand and, say, the Ahirom sarcophagus and the Abibaal or the Elibaal inscriptions on the other hand. These latter texts had been written to be hidden from human eyes, they are more mantic, magic or something similar, their addressee is the deity alone. These texts express or *constitute* the special relationship between the king of Byblos and his goddess, the mistress of Byblos, alone.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> This is even true of the Aḥīrōm sarcophagus, whose text was written to be hidden some 10 m. under the surface for eternity (not only for the some hundred years until its robbery in antiquity or until its discovery by modern archaeologists in 1924). No one ever was expected to read its text again or even to see it from afar. Also those texts in which someone is addressed in the second person, as is in the Tabnit and the 'Esmūn'azōr sarcophagus inscription, to prevent it from displacement i. e. secondary re-use at the expense of the deceased, are no different cases. Or should we really imagine that a robber and plunderer of a royal grave be so literate to read the inscription and be so pious to give up his outrage when he reads the plea of the deceased not to disturb him? The text of the Aḥīrōm sarcophagus, for instance, was not written to prevent some reader, who had gone so far to dig the shaft and to enter the burial chamber, from opening the sarcophagus, but to prevent him, by help of the goddess of Byblos, even from starting such a job. A text like that of the Aḥīrōm sarcophagus had its magic power within itself. Its inscription was not meant to be read again after the deposit of the sarcophagus down under the cliffs of ancient Gubla. For a new publication and interpretation of the Aḥīrōm sarcophagus inscription and a new reading of the Aḥīrōm shaft inscription see Reinhard G. Lehmann, *Die Inschrift(en) des Aḥīrōm – Sarkophags und die Schachtinschrift des Grabes V in Jbeil (Byblos)*, Mainz: Zabern 2005.



However, it is not so with other Byblian texts, and in particular not so with the Yaḥawmilk stele, which rather should be regarded as part of royal propaganda to be compared with, e.g., the Mesha inscription or the Karatepe inscriptions. As part of the religious propaganda and claim for power the long text of Yaḥawmilk was meant for public display. Its first and main purpose is King Yaḥawmilk's own praising of his good relationship with his Lady the 'Mistress of Byblos', who alone could guarantee the welfare of the state. He did not write it to ensure himself privately of her grace, but to tell the admiring public at the entrance of the temple of the *Ba'alat-Gubla* something about the greatness of Yaḥawmilk and his goddess. In short, we have to keep in mind that the stele of Yaḥawmilk is not a written text alone, but that it is a written *public display* text. This has some very important implications:

1. Public display texts are deliberately formed texts. From a linguistic point of view, they are created using set pieces of formulaic language. From the epigraphical and archaeological point of view this means that their appearance is not arbitrary, but follows certain rules of visual creativity within a conventional framework of calligraphic and layout tradition which it cannot evade without giving up its very character of public display.<sup>36</sup>
2. Because it was normal in antiquity for texts to be read out, at least to be read audibly, we have to develop a certain sensitivity to notice hints for oral performance in the written form of a document. Moreover, an ancient public display text should not be misread as being unilaterally literal or textual in a modern sense. An ancient scribe who produces royal stelae is not a middle-ranking desk-bound secretary, ghost-writing his superior's papers that never will be read nor heard again, but he is a highly-trained specialist in creating literature, which is really good literature, and which is good still after it is read and heard a thousand times. The now-silent text once had an intended sound!
3. It should go without saying that the Yaḥawmilk stele was not meant as a kind of Baedeker or tourist guide to the Gublaite main sanctuary. We have to keep in mind that the majority of those who *saw* the stele in antiquity could not *read* it fluently. But probably it could be 'read out' or 'proclaimed' to them, supported by some oral tradition. Because of that, the text of the

<sup>36</sup> For instance, one cannot write a funeral text in scratching graffito technique column-like on a jar-handle nor incise a real letter upside-down on a wall, nor should law codices be written single-lined on the lid of a sarcophagus!

Yahawmilk stele must also be regarded within the framework of 'oral formulaic language tradition' and 'oral poetry'.<sup>37</sup>

Our detection of spaces and their distribution is indeed an *account* of such 'oral poetry' and can be read as a kind of vocal score for the public performance ... if only we were able to set the right vowels and syllable lengths, which is still a subject for further study in Phoenician philology.

But the proof of the pudding is the eating.

There is an unnoticed and unintentional but nearly perfect cross-check to such a prosodic-metric interpretation of spaces in the Yahawmilk text by the metrics of Fecht. In 1990 the German Egyptologist G. Fecht published his book about metrics in Hebrew and Phoenician.<sup>38</sup> As a specimen of the reliability of his metrical rules of Phoenician, which he had elaborated on the basis of transliterated material alone,<sup>39</sup> amongst others he performs his metrical analysis of the Yahawmilk stele. Amazingly enough, his metrics of the Yahawmilk inscription agrees on a very large scale with what I would call the written, epigraphically detectable 'space syntax' of this text. It is presented here graphically as a second plate where I added some more symbols to show how Fecht's metre fits into our spaces detected in the original inscription. Thus it can easily be seen that there is a high rate of agreement (pl. 2).

<sup>37</sup> See, for instance, up-to-date recent discussion, J. Foley, *How to Read an Oral Poem*, Urbana and Chicago 2002. As applied to Biblical Hebrew texts, already R. Culley, *Oral formulaic language in the Biblical psalms*, Toronto 1967.

<sup>38</sup> G. Fecht, *Metrik des Hebräischen und Phönizischen*, Wiesbaden 1990 (ÄAT 19).

<sup>39</sup> See Fecht p. 3 and p. 182. The other Phoenician texts of which G. Fecht provided a metrical analysis in his book are KAI 1 (Aḥīrōm), KAI 4 (Yahūmilk), KAI 14 'Esmūn'azōr), KAI 227 (Pyrgi), and KAI 38 (Milkyaton).

- 1 'nk-yḥwmlk ⊗ mlk-gbl ¶ bn-yḥrb' l ⊗ bn-bn-ṛmlk ⊗ mlk  
 2 gbl ¶ š-p'ltm ⊗ hrbt ⊗ b'lt-gbl ¶ mmlkt ⊗ l-gbl ¶ wqr-ṛnk ⊗  
 3 't-rbty ⊗ b'lt-gbl ¶ -wšm' ⊗ [...] -ql ¶ wp'ṛ-nk ⊗ lrbty ⊗ b'lt  
 4 gbl ¶ hmzbbḥ-nḥšt -zn ⊗ š-bḥz[•]h-z ¶ whpth -ḥrṣ-zn ⊗ š  
 5 ṛ-pn-pthy-z ¶ wh'pt-ḥrṣ ⊗ š-btkk-ḥn ⊗ š-ṛpth-ḥrṣ-zn ¶  
 6 wh'ṛpt -z' ⊗ w'mdh ¶ whktrm ⊗ š-ṛ-hm ⊗ wmspnth ¶ p'ṛ-nk ⊗  
 7 yḥwmlk ⊗ mlk-gbl ¶ lrbty ⊗ b'lt-gbl ¶ -km - š-qṛ'ṛ ⊗ ṛ-rbty ⊗  
 8 b'lt-gbl ¶ wšm'-ql ⊗ wp'ṛ-ly ⊗ n'm ¶ tbrk -b'lt-gbl ⊗ -yt-yḥwmlk  
 9 mlk-gbl ¶ wthww ⊗ wt'rk-ymw-¶ -wšntw ⊗ -l-gbl ⊗ k-mlk- šdq-h' -¶ -wttn  
 10 [lw hrbt b] 'lt-gbl ¶ ḥn ⊗ l'n-ṛlnm ⊗ wl'n-ṛm-ṛṣ-z ¶ whn ⊗ m-ṛ=  
 11 =š-z ¶ [.....] -kl-mmlkt ¶ wkl-ṛdm ⊗ š-ysp ⊗ lp'ṛ-ml'kt-¶ -ṛlt-mz=  
 12 =bḥ-zn ¶ [w'lt pf] h-ḥrṣ -zn ⊗ w'lt-ṛpt-z' ¶ šm-ṛnk ⊗ yḥwmlk ⊗  
 13 mlk-gbl ¶ [tšt ṛ] k ⊗ ṛ-ml'kt-h' ¶ w'm-ḥl-tšt-šm ⊗ ṛk ⊗ w'm-ts=  
 14 =ṛ-ml'kt-z' ¶ [wts] g ⊗ ṛ-h[ q/ ' ? ... ] z-¶ -dl-ysdh ⊗ ṛlt-mqm-z ⊗ wtgl-  
 15 -mstrw ¶ tsrḥ[ w] ⊗ hrbt ⊗ b'lt-gbl ¶ 'yt-h'dm-h' ⊗ wzr'w ⊗  
 16 't-pn -kl-ṛn-g[ bl]

## SYMBOLS

- ⊗ Epigraphic space *and* margin of colon according to Fecht  
 ¶ Epigraphic space *and* end of metrical line (stichos) according to Fecht  
 ▮ Epigraphic space, but *no* end of colon according to Fecht  
 ⊗ End of colon according to Fecht, but no epigraphic space  
 ¶ End of metrical verse (stichos) according to Fecht, but no epigraphic space  
 = Epigraphic line break with lexematic break  
 — No epigraphic control (damaged / not definite *or* [completed])

Pl. 2: Transliteration Visualizing the Agreement of Spaces with Fecht's Metre

The first important agreement between epigraphical spacing and metrical versification is that there are 32 paragraphs (= metrical lines) according to Fecht, 26 of which are obviously spaced in the original inscription. The only exceptions where the end of a 'metrical line' or 'paragraph' is not epigraphically marked by space are lines 3, 7, 9 (twice), 11, and 14, and even these few exceptions are not that surprising: Both line 9 and line 11, seem to be the most narrowly written lines of the whole stele with the most letters squeezed into them (up to 42 in line 9). In line 7 (*km* ¶ 'š), the stronger phonetic power of spacing lies, as already has been demonstrated, before the relative 'š, which seems to be a case where Fecht's metrical rules are a subject for further clarification. Finally, the instances of line 3 and 14 are so close to the *lacunae* of these lines that we are not really able to decide what their real metrical position might have been.<sup>40</sup>

More than half of the *cola* identified by reasons of theoretical metrics only by Fecht are epigraphically marked by spaces too, but omission of spaces in this position, marked in plate 2 by simple ⊗, increases in the second half of the inscription as well as in the second half of a line, showing that spacing here is rather a case of 'soft' rules or of intuition than a 'hard', orthographic system.

In addition, spacing where there is no end of a *colon* according to Fecht, is rare. There are only fourteen instances, most of which appear in connection either with the relative 'š or with the demonstratives *zn/z'*, while two of them, remarkably enough, are set after the precativ verbal forms *tbrk* ¶ and *tsr* ¶ (lines 8 respectively 14). Spacing and not-spacing of *cola* and spacing within them seems to depend on other parameters than metrics or rhythm alone, as already has been shown in the case of the bound phrase *pṯh* ¶ *ḥrṣ*, and has to be a subject for careful further study, too.

It is true that in Northwest Semitic epigraphy spacing analysis, taking into consideration metrics, grammar, and the influence of oral performance, is still a subject for further study and a job that has to be done with lots of texts formerly thought to be written in uneven *scriptio continua*. Nevertheless it is obvious that spaces are not haphazardly set. However it goes without saying also, that there was no pressure imposed by some 'system' and that a scribe had the freedom to evade phraseology for reasons of phonetics or performance.

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<sup>40</sup> The blank, unspaced ¶ at the end of line 5 of course cannot be relevant here.

Let me sum up with a methodological demand and task for Northwest Semitic epigraphy:

1. A thorough re-investigation of Phoenician (and Canaanite in general) inscriptions is to be done under the perspective of word or phrase division. The special focus has to be on what I would call the 'space syntax' of a text, either of really spaced written texts, or of inscriptions written with dividing marks, the dots most commonly known as word dividers (which, as can be shown easily, they are mostly not!). In principle, the problems and main questions remain the same, and for both types of dividing technique there is enough material. Other Phoenician texts are written in the same 'discontinuing *scriptio continua*' like the Yaḥawmilk stele, for instance the Karatepe inscriptions or, as already noted by Clermont-Ganneau, the inscriptions of Oumm el-Awamid. And there are comparable examples of texts written with dividing marks, some of them with not-dotted phrases within, such as some of the Hebrew Lachish ostraca, and others 'hypertrophically' dotted, like the Mesha stele.

2. Palaeography must not content itself with letter forms and their development (and often make some sophisticated and all too optimistic palaeographic dating thereof), but as a methodologically required first step has to focus on the *originally intended form* of a document, i. e. its graphic presentation, its layout parameters and its scribal attitude. I am convinced that here lies the answer to a lot of questions concerning metre and metrics, the mechanics of oral poetry and the question of what a 'word' was for the speaker (and writer) of those ancient days.

A Tentative Translation Taking into Account the Prosodic Organization of the Text by Spaces\*

- 1 I-am Yaḥawmilk king-of-Byblos son-of Yḥrba'al grandson-of 'Urimilk-king-of
- 2 Byblos whom-me-made the-Lady-Mistress-of-Byblos majesty-over-Byblos and-I-invoking
- 3 her-my-Lady-Mistress-of-Byblos-and-hearing [...]-(my)-voice and-I-making for-the-Lady-Mistress-of
- 4 Byblos altar-of-bronze, this, which (is)-in-this-court and-the-engraving golden-this which
- 5 all-above-over-this-my-inscription and-the-winged-golden-disk which-is-in-the-midst-of-the-stone which-is-above-the engraving-this-golden
- 6 and-the-colonnade, this, and-its-pillars and-the-capitals which-are-upon-them and-its-roof made-I
- 7 Yaḥawmilk, king-of-Byblos, for-my-Lady Mistress-of-Byblos-inasmuch-as I-invoked-my-Lady
- 8 Mistress-of-Byblos and-(she)-hearing-my-voice and-(she)-making-me-happy. May-she-bless, the-Mistress-of-Byblos-him-Yaḥawmilk
- 9 king-of-Byblos and-grant-him-life and-prolong-his-days-and-his-years-over-Byblos-for-righteous-king-is-he-and-she-may-give
- 10 [him, the Lady M]istress-of-Byblos favour in-the-face-of-the-gods and-in-the-face-of-the-people-of-this-land and-favour-by-the-people-of-this-la =
- 11 =nd! [.....]every-majesty and-every-man who-further-does-work(sacrifice?)-upon-al=
- 12 =tar, this, [and-upon-engra]ving golden, this, and-upon-the-colonnade-this, (my)name-I Yaḥawmilk
- 13 king-of-Byblos [you shall put/commemorate together-with]-yours-upon-this-work(sacrifice?) and-if-not-you-put-(my)-name-with-yours- and-if-you-remo =
- 14 =ve (refuse?) work(sacrifice?) this [and-take aw]ay-the[...] -this-along-with-its-base from/upon-this-place-and-uncover
- 15 its-vault may-ruin-him-the-Lady-Mistress-of-Byblos him-this-very-man and-his-seed
- 16 in-the-presence-of all-gods-of-B[byblos].

\* To be sure it is not intended to give a literary translation here, but to give an idea of the prosodic organization of the text in English.

## VISUALIZING THE TEXT ORGANIZATION BY SYNTAX AND SPACING

<sup>1</sup>nk yḥwmlk mlk-gbl bn-yḥrb l bn-bn- rmlk-mlk l<sup>2</sup>gbl

š-

p ltn hrbt-b l<sup>3</sup>t-gbl mmlkt- l-gbl

wqr- nk<sup>4</sup> t- rbt<sup>5</sup>y- b<sup>6</sup> l<sup>7</sup>t-gbl- wšm<sup>8</sup> [...] -ql

wp l- nk lrbty- b<sup>9</sup> l<sup>10</sup>t-gbl

hmz bḥ- nḥšt zn

š bḥz [•] h-z

whpth ḥrṣ- zn

š l<sup>11</sup> pn-ptḥy- z

wh<sup>12</sup> pt- ḥrṣ

š- btk- bn

š- l-ptḥ ḥrṣ- zn

<sup>13</sup>wh<sup>14</sup> ipt z<sup>15</sup> w<sup>16</sup> mdh whktrm

š- l-hm

wmspnth

p l- nk<sup>17</sup> yḥwmlk mlk-gbl l rbt<sup>18</sup>y b<sup>19</sup> l<sup>20</sup>t-gbl- km

š-

qr<sup>21</sup> t<sup>22</sup> t- rbt<sup>23</sup>y b<sup>24</sup> l<sup>25</sup>t-gbl

wšm<sup>26</sup> -ql

wp l- ly- n<sup>27</sup>m

TBRK b<sup>28</sup> l<sup>29</sup>t-gbl- y<sup>30</sup>t- yḥwmlk<sup>31</sup> mlk-gbl

wḥww

w<sup>32</sup>rk- ymw- wšntw- l-gbl- k- mlk- šdq- h<sup>33</sup>

- wtn<sup>34</sup> l<sup>35</sup> [w hrbt b] l<sup>36</sup>t-gbl

ḥn l<sup>37</sup> r- lnm

w<sup>38</sup> l<sup>39</sup> n- m- rṣ- z

wḥn- m- r<sup>40</sup> = l<sup>41</sup> = š- z

[.....] - kl- mmlkt

wkl-<sup>2</sup>dm

<sup>2</sup>š-ysp-lp<sup>6</sup>l<sup>1</sup>ml<sup>2</sup>kt-<sup>6</sup>lt-mz=<sup>12</sup>=bh zn

[w<sup>6</sup>lt<sup>6</sup>pt]h hrš zn

w<sup>6</sup>lt-<sup>6</sup>rpt-z

šm-nk-yhwmlk<sup>13</sup>mlk-gbl

[tšt<sup>2</sup>t]k-<sup>6</sup>l-ml<sup>2</sup>kt-h

w<sup>2</sup>m-<sup>2</sup>bl- tšt-šm<sup>2</sup> tk-

w<sup>2</sup>m- ts=<sup>14</sup>=r ml<sup>2</sup>kt<sup>2</sup> z

[w ts]g<sup>2</sup>t-h[q<sup>6</sup>l<sup>6</sup>z-dl-ysdh<sup>6</sup>lt-mqm-z

w tgl-<sup>15</sup>-mstrw

tsrh[w]-hrbt-b<sup>6</sup>lt-gbl

<sup>2</sup>yt-h<sup>2</sup>dm-h<sup>2</sup> wzr<sup>6</sup>w<sup>16</sup>t-pn<sup>2</sup>kl<sup>2</sup>ln-g[bl]